

About Oh Shit! What Now?

Oh Shit! What Now? is an educational collective based in Austin, Texas, with members from diverse political perspectives. We are staunchly antifascist and independent of any particular leftist or radical doctrine.

Our mission is to cultivate safer spaces for learning, discussing, creating, and building relationships across a broad spectrum of ideology and activist experience. We hope to attract everyone from freshly-activated novices to long-term organizers in the spirit of inspiring coalition building, increased intersectionality between causes, and shared direct action.

Our classes are intentionally inclusive of all people regardless of ability, age, cultural background, education, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, language, nationality, physical appearance, race, religion, self-expression, sexual orientation, status as a parent or other such factors. We actively work to prioritize the voices of those who are historically marginalized. We do not allow behaviors or language in our spaces that have a negative impact on the safety of participants.

Our collective will never bow to threats of violence and intimidation from outside sources. Creating space in which people can learn, share, and grow in solidarity is a basic and vital human activity that we believe can help lead the way to a better future.

While we recognize a wide range of legitimate political views, we will never defend the right of any group to advocate for genocide, nationalism, bigotry, xenophobia, white supremacy or other behaviors which further endanger the lives of vulnerable populations, nor will we tolerate those who stand with them. We support the fundamental right of endangered communities to organize in self-defense against their oppressors.

We hope you will join us in our classes and help build a healthy, resilient culture of mutual aid, resistance and revolt in our city and beyond.

About Crustacean Zine Library

The Crustacean Zine Library is a reading room and gathering place for zine enthusiasts in Austin, Texas. We have a collection of over 2000 zines and independent publications from 1920-present, and we host monthly zine workshops and occasional movie, game, and co-working events.

PROTEST



compiled by the
Oh Shit! What Now? Collective

INTRO

This zine has been compiled by the Oh Shit! What Now? Collective and the Crustacean Zine Library as a primer for those who are new to protesting, and a refresher for those with whom we have shared the streets. Our intention is to make this a living document and continue to adapt and change the material to meet the needs of our communities.

Much of this information has been borrowed and repurposed from other zines and documents before us, and we encourage you to use this information as you see fit to strengthen solidarity, promote diversity of tactics, and continue to resist capitalism and fascism in all its forms while simultaneously conceiving, creating, and cultivating their alternatives.

We wish you strength, love, and support - and we look forward to seeing you in the streets.

<3 Oh Shit! What Now? / Crustacean Zine Library

Reach Out & Touch Us

Oh Shit! What Now? * ohshitwhatnow.org * [@ohshit_atx](https://twitter.com/ohshit_atx) *
ohshit@ohshitwhatnow.org * facebook.com/ohshitwhatnowatx

Crustacean Zine Library * crustaceanzinelibrary.com * [@crustzinelibe](https://twitter.com/crustzinelibe) *
crustaceanzinelibrary@gmail.com * facebook.com/crustaceanzinelibrary

Resources

The resources referenced in this zine are aggregated on this pinterest board:
<https://www.pinterest.com/drublood/protest-101/>

Use the blank pages for notes, local media information, legal hotlines, and other important information specific to your area.

Know Your RIGHTS

The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

You have the right to assemble, but there is no guarantee that the state to which you've granted the ability to legitimize this right will grant you the courtesy to exercise it. Therefore, it is important to understand the boundaries of your rights in the eyes of the state. Remember that when you stand up in protest or in solidarity, you become an immediate threat to those you oppose. Standing up to your government, the police, or fascists (as blurry as the line between can sometimes be) makes you a target. It is important to be prepared to be treated as a criminal in spaces of resistance, so you are prepared for the occasion that you become criminalized. Here are some quick tips and reminders:

- *Public v private spaces*
 - The first amendment typically grants you free speech rights on public property, but not private. Be aware of the boundaries between the two, and understand your limits and willingness to risk arrest if you test those boundaries.
- *It is legal to film police*
 - Cops may legitimately order cease of activities that are truly interfering with legitimate law enforcement operations.
 - Cops may not confiscate or demand to view your digital photos/videos without a warrant
 - Cops may not delete your photographs or videos
 - COPS WILL LIE about what they may or may not do
- *If police ask to see your phone, tell them you do not consent to the search of your device*
 - If asked for password, politely refuse
 - Police can't compel, but they can pressure, and they will LIE.
- *If stopped, ask - "Am I free to go?" if not - you are detained & there must be cause*
 - You are required to identify yourself (name and address) if asked by police to do so
 - If detained, politely ask what crime you are suspected of committing
 - Other than the above, do not talk to cops
 - OTHER THAN THE ABOVE, DO NOT TALK TO COPS
 - COPS WILL LIE about the information you are required to provide if detained.

CENTERING

Protests can be highly-charged and emotional, and it's important to know your purpose for being there. Are you there because you are passionate about the cause, are you resisting legislation or counter-demonstrating, or are you curious and wanting to learn? Knowing where you stand is a crucial component of staying grounded and connected to your center. Preparing for a protest for which you are a strong supporter or dissenter for a specific cause might require you to do your homework and understand exactly why you stand for or against that cause. Not only might you be confronted with state resistance, but these days you will almost certainly be confronted with counter-protesters or propaganda pushers who are interested in confusing you and/or catching you saying or doing something that they can use against you or your cause.

Knowing your limits and your purpose in being there can help you stay out of the propaganda reels of your opponents, as well as make you less susceptible to the tricks of provocateurs and infiltrators. Prepare to stay on message as much as possible, but if someone asks you questions that make you feel uncomfortable or for which you do not have a solid answer - refuse to answer. If you are harassed by aggressive media - walk away. Find a buddy if you need to.

Additionally, understand your limits and boundaries when it comes to the assessed risk of any direct action. DO NOT EVER LET ANYONE TALK YOU INTO DOING SOMETHING THAT YOU DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING. As Oh Shit! What Now? Collective member, Kit O'Connell, says, "So when a stranger shows up at your meeting and asks you to burn down the Dean's office on campus, he's a cop." An honest and committed activist will never pressure you into doing something you do not feel comfortable doing. IT IS ALWAYS OK TO SAY NO.

At the same time, please try to understand, accept, and assume that everyone else who is present has also centered themselves on what they are willing to do and why. They, too, have the right to not answer questions and to set their own boundaries. Diversity of tactics means we accept that others understand and have accepted the consequences of their actions and are taking risks they feel comfortable taking. Be accountable to yourself and your affinity groups, and allow others to be accountable to theirs. Under no circumstance should you attempt to "out," unmask, or otherwise invade the privacy of those you stand with. You simply never know why someone might need to maintain anonymity.

ANTIFA

Antifascism (Antifa) is a broad coalition of people and groups opposed to fascism, and is characterized by organizing against/defending against fascism. Antifa actions can take on many forms, from counter-protests to directly defending the marginalized against violence. It confronts fascism directly and lets those who wish to harm our community through violence and oppression know that they aren't welcome, and that we won't tolerate their cruelty and hate.

Mutual Aid

MUTUAL AID is the idea that the evolution of Humanity as a sentient species and the emergence of Human Civilization were the result of solidarity for the needs of our fellow community members, cooperation and mutual support to overcome our mutual obstacles, defend against our mutual adversaries and create a society in which all who cooperate will mutually benefit. Mutual Aid is the basis of the village community, the labor syndicate (Union), cooperative and collective businesses, mutualist credit unions, mutual insurance and various mutual aid societies where people volunteer to help others. Mutual aid advances the ideal of collective liberation and solidarity rather than charity.

(Source: https://www.theyliediedie.org/ressources/biblio/en/Unknown_FUNDAMENTALS_OF_ANARCHISM_MUTUAL_AID.html)

Black Bloc (Cont.)

While a black bloc seems like a mass of people acting as a single unit, in reality smaller groups within the bloc should work to maintain their autonomy. By remaining accountable to close comrades or affinity groups of allied activists, these subgroups within the bloc keep each other safe and mitigate the influence of undercover police or provocateurs, who may urge the crowd to take more extreme actions in order to give cops an excuse to crack down.

Black bloc is a versatile tactic, applicable to many different situations. However, it isn't appropriate in every situation. Radical activists might choose to dress in everyday clothes in order to better blend in with large crowds when black bloc would attract undesirable attention, or cause unnecessary confusion among those unfamiliar with the tactic.

Remember, black bloc should never be confused with a movement, or with antifascism itself. It's merely one possible tactic of many often used by antifascists and others looking to fight back against unjust systems and dangerous fascists (both in and out of police uniform).



Masking Up and Black Bloc

Black bloc are the masked activists in matching black clothes you may have seen at protests or on TV. There are many misconceptions about black bloc, especially about who they are and why they look the way they do.

One common misconception is that antifa (antifascists) and black bloc are one and the same, or that black bloc are all members of a particular activist movement. In reality, black bloc is not a movement but a tactic that has been used by diverse groups and movements over the years. Originally developed by autonomists in Europe, black bloc tactics first came to America during the protests against the World Trade Organization, including the famous "Battle of Seattle" in 1999.

By wearing masks and near identical clothing, activists in a black bloc protect their identities while creating a sense of unity and common purpose. While acts of property destruction by masked individuals tend to receive most media attention, one of the most common purposes of a black bloc is to protect other activists from attacks by police and fascists.

During the January 20, 2017 protests against the inauguration of Pres. Donald Trump, dozens of reporters photographed a burning trashcan after an activist lit it on fire. Meanwhile, few noticed when black bloc activists rescued a parent with a child and a disabled person from police who were indiscriminately pepper spraying a crowd that included journalists and bystanders along with protesters. In Charlottesville, antifascists in black bloc defended clergy members and people of color from nazis, while at protests in Berkeley, Austin, and elsewhere they've acted as volunteer human shields to keep violent fascists and out of control cops away from other activists less prepared to deal with their attacks.

Especially in the modern social media era, wearing masks -- even without matching black clothing -- can be an important protection. Activists who resist white supremacy, the police state, and injustice can, if identified, face consequences ranging from violent assaults by nazis to loss of employment. Undocumented immigrants might choose to mask up to protect themselves from immigration authorities.

A group of individuals in masks and matching nondescript clothing create collective anonymity that makes it harder to pick out any one person. In a pinch, activists can take off their black clothes and change into "civilian" outfits. But anonymity isn't foolproof. Activists have been identified by their glasses, hair color, tattoos, even the type of backpack or footwear they are wearing.



There is always risk in public demonstrations of resistance and/or solidarity. It is a good idea to educate yourself on your rights and the potential risks of any particular action or protest before participating. While it is good to be cautious, be cautious that you don't let caution prevent you from taking action. While one can never eliminate risk entirely, it is possible to minimize it.

Following are some tips for staying safe summarized from "Health and Safety at Militant Actions" zine: <https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/direct-action/health-and-safety-at-militant-actions/>

- Make a plan of action with friends or affinity group
- Be aware of your surroundings
- BUDDY SYSTEM always
- Protect your privacy
- Prepare an exit route/meetup spot
- Smile, you're on camera
 - Do not assume you are not being filmed, and if you are filming, please respect the privacy of others.
- Get lots of rest and water before demonstration
- Have a safe space in mind at all times
- Assume riot cops may be coming
- Don't panic; help others stay calm
- Know your options, and what you and your comrades intend to do if arrested
- Know what to do if exposed to teargas
- Know how to minimize effects of teargas
- Know how to deal with anxiety
- Do not wear earrings, piercings, necklaces, ties, etc.
- Tuck long hair out of the way
- Do not wear contact lenses
- Write the legal support number on your arm
- Don't act on rumors
- Always consider the impact your actions will have on those most vulnerable
- Don't leave your friends behind! Watch out for those who may be targeted by the state or disrupters.
- Be aware that if we let our fear win, we let this system and its agents win

DIVERSITY of TACTICS

Diversity of tactics is a phenomenon wherein a social movement makes periodic use of force for disruptive or defensive purposes, stepping beyond the limits of nonviolence, but also stopping short of total militarization. It also refers to the theory which asserts this to be the most effective strategy of civil disobedience for social change. Diversity of tactics may promote nonviolent tactics, or armed resistance, or a range of methods in between, depending on the level of repression the political movement is facing. It sometimes claims to advocate for "forms of resistance that maximize respect for life" -Wikipedia

Remember:

- Not everyone wants to be filmed or photographed (ask permission)
- Be respectful of the safety of those around you
- If you are unsure about an activity, person or group, move away from them
- Never unmask, harass, or interfere with your fellow protesters
- Beware of undercover officers
- DO NOT TALK TO COPS

Street Medics



Street medics are volunteers with various degrees of medical training who provide first aid, medical supplies, and other forms of care at protests. Street medics can often provide critical first-aid care faster than EMTs or paramedics, since they work in a less formal manner and stand directly with protesters. They typically wear a red cross or other medical symbol on their clothing or bags to identify themselves. Many street medics also provide care outside of protests, and will mobilize to assist disaster-stricken, homeless, and low income communities.

Green Hats

The Green Hats are legal observers who act as an independent third party at political protests to hold cops accountable for their actions. Identifiable by their bright green hats, they observe, record, and document the protest and any potentially unconstitutional police activity. This information is then used to aid defense lawyers representing arrested protesters. Green hats are organized and trained by the The National Lawyers Guild, the nation's oldest and largest progressive bar association. As policy, the NLG Green Hats do not provide support for hate groups.

IF YOU SEE SOMEONE GETTING ARRESTED...

STAY CALM.

ASK FOR NAME & BIRTHDATE.

CALL US. **512-817-4ALG**

KEEP RECORDING.

AUSTIN LAWYERS GUILD CAN HELP GET THEM OUT.



The Austin Lawyers Guild often opens up this support line during protests to support those who engage in civil disobedience.

Affinity Groups

Social activism can be tough work. Acting alone, we may feel powerless to create real change. An affinity group can provide practical support as well as inspiration, motivation, and fun. Your affinity group might work together to prepare for a particular direct action or campaign, or it might stick together for years.

Support and community. Americans are increasingly isolated. Mainstream culture encourages us to be cut-off from each other, relying on money, corporate products, and screen time to fill our needs. Even as activists, we often act as individuals, rather than in solidarity with others.

Forming community is one of the best ways we can undermine consolidated power. Many of us have lost community-building skills, so we can relearn them by being part of a small, supportive group. These skills make us all better activists, organizers, and leaders.

Taking action. Affinity groups support each other in taking “direct action,” such as attending a rally. Members take on different roles so everyone can participate.

It's fun! In addition to your commitment to social change, your group might share a common interest. You might get together just to have a potlucks and share laughs.

(Source: <http://localcircles.org/2012/05/17/what-is-an-affinity-group/>)

Jail Support

When protesting results in arrest, it is important to support arrestees by tracking them through the justice system, making sure they have access to legal counsel, and offering moral support to newly-released arrestees with offerings of food, beverages, and other comfort items.

Keep in mind, this might only be the beginning for arrestees, and prepare to provide support throughout the judicial process.

PACKING LIST

- ☐ First Aid kit
 - ☐ Bandages
 - ☐ antibacterial ointment
 - ☐ nylon wrap bandage
 - ☐ aspirin or ibuprofen
 - ☐ Gauze
 - ☐ Alcohol wipes
 - ☐ Bandages
 - ☐ Inhaler, epipen, any essential medication in original packaging
 - ☐ Dry bandana
 - ☐ Bandana soaked in vinegar or cider vinegar in plastic bag
 - ☐ Eye drops
 - ☐ Baby wipes - water-based - OR - paper towels in solution of baking soda/water
- ☐ Pen, paper, markers
- ☐ Snacks and water
- ☐ Backup battery/charger
- ☐ Important numbers
- ☐ Zippered backpack or messenger bag
- ☐ Second backpack or messenger bag
 - ☐ Wear in front of body
 - ☐ Pack towels & extra clothes in zippered bag for extra cushion
 - ☐ Use for important items that require easy access
- ☐ Bandanas to cover face for protection or anonymity

DRESS for Success

Some protest fashion tips:

- DO NOT WEAR CONTACT LENSES
- Comfortable Shoes
- Multiple layers & cover skin
- Goggles or shatter-resistant glasses for front line

Security Culture

Security Culture is a set of customs shared by a community whose members may be targeted by the government or exposed by doxxing. We talk about security culture as opposed to security protocols, as culture is unconscious, instinctive, and thus effortless whereas protocol

is learned or contrived. Security culture is designed to minimize risk and avoid reinventing the wheel. Practiced effectively, security culture helps offset paranoia and panic in stressful situations. Security culture is a form of etiquette and relies upon the consent of all involved. Security culture is NOT paranoia institutionalized. Rather, it is a way to avoid unhealthy paranoia by minimizing risks in advance. For this reason, groups should determine the security level of their actions first thing, and all subsequent communications should be secured accordingly.

The central principles of security culture are that people should never be privy to information they do not need to know, and that all participants in a group are encouraged to say no at any time about anything for any reason. Some other principles of security culture include:

- Don't ask, don't tell
- Don't ever turn your friends over to your enemies
- Don't make it too easy for your enemies to figure out what you're up to
- Don't discuss private matters or ideas in public
- Develop a private shorthand for communicating with your comrades in public
- Develop methods of "vouching" for new members of groups
- Be aware of the security of meeting locations
- Be aware of the reliability of those around you
- Learn and abide by the security expectations of each person you interact with
- Respect differences in style
- Let others know your precise security needs
- Look out for other people
- Don't let suspicion be used against you
- Don't be intimidated by bluffing
- Always be prepared for the possibility that you are under observation
- Don't mistake attracting surveillance for being effective
- Code of silence, NOT code of voicelessness
- Balance the need to escape detection by enemies against need to be accessible to friends (both current and potential)
- DO NOT TALK TO COPS. EVER. FOR ANY REASON.

CELL PHONE Tips

Cell phones are tracking devices, and bad security habits can compromise your whole organizing network. Remember, a network is only as secure as its weakest link. Here are some basic tips to ensure you are protecting the privacy of those in your network:

- Assess Risk
 - what are you protecting?
 - what are the consequences if you can't protect it?
 - Remove data or leave phone behind based on risk assessment
- Password protect
 - Strong password
 - At least 8 characters
 - Research password lockers
- Use encrypted communication channels

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

- Protect the privacy of participants and bystanders
- Protect your own privacy
- Delete revealing information before sharing
- Get technical and legal advice if necessary
- Consider the potential consequences of sharing
- Follow local Twitter accounts or hashtags to stay informed of surrounding events

